

The Oracle Speaks

If you happen to be a movie actor or a dramatic critic and you feel that you would like to dislike Shelley Hull, only you know it isn't displaying a Christian spirit, go ahead and dislike him as much as you like, for he dislikes you, too.

He told us all about it, and he didn't ask us to tell, so we are going to tell.

Movie actors he dismissed with a few words. He said he never would be one unless he was starving, and we don't wish him any such hard luck, great as would be the benefit to the screen, should he decide to change his mind.

Mr. Hull did not say that he would not be a critic unless he were starving. Perhaps he feels that in that case his condition would not be improved. But he began at the beginning.

It was in the late summer of 1918—September 11, to be exact. The rays of the sun beat harshly on the flagging of Forty-second Street and the tall brick building radiated some of that well known commodity which the Yankees have for so long been trying to give to the Red Sox, of Boston, but are now reserving for the Beas of Berlin.

Midway in this brick building ran a long, narrow alleyway, and on one side, pushed against the wall, stood a straight wooden bench. On this bench sat a woman. Hour after hour she waited, drooping under the heat, but never relaxing her vigilance. For she was under orders. Her chief had sent her to trail a German spy, who was being acting like a captain in the American army.

At last she was rewarded. Footsteps sounded on the narrow stairway, and a tall young man appeared, disguised by a pair of shell spectacles. The woman drew back timorously, but the man removed his disguise and she saw that she had made no mistake. The man was Shelley Hull. The woman was we. The place was the stage door of the Eltinge Theatre, where Shelley Hull and Elsie Shannon are killing four birds with two stones.

Although Mr. Hull had just been contacted by a German spy, he eyed us with suspicion. "You are a critic," he said almost immediately, and we fancied that he was just trying to be

nice, but we found out afterward that he was accusing and not conciliatory.

Some one, it may have been Irvin Cobb, has said that critics should be interned and their young destroyed wherever found. We thought this was very funny, and later, after we had discovered how the land lay, we told it to Mr. Hull, and tried to get him to say that he agreed with whoever it was that said it. But he shook his head. "Why bother?" he asked, lightly and pleasantly. "It really doesn't matter what they say, does it? I do not fancy that any one takes it seriously, and sometimes it makes interesting reading." Now, wasn't that kind of him!

"Critics never made an actor nor a show. How could they? Why, after the performance they rush away to the office and write their first impressions, which, after all, may be all wrong. Probably, if they should see the performance a week later, they would write something quite different."

"But some of the shows don't last that long," we said, trying to divert Mr. Hull from the subject, which was getting embarrassing. But he refused to smile, so we tried this one:

"There is a beautiful, charming actress who says that critics and interviewers are fiends. She says that we say anything we like about her, and if she answers back we say 'Cat.' If she keeps silent we say 'Stupid.'"

"Answer back!" cried Mr. Hull, aghast. "I am sure no actor nor actress ever would be guilty of such a thing." Of course we knew that it was unethical for any one to express either thanks or protest for what has been written about him, but for the moment we had forgotten it.

"Ethics or no ethics, it is human nature to wish to prove to any one that he is wrong when he intimates that you might be improved. Why, every time we receive a letter telling us that our stuff is no good we are up in arms. But we can't answer back, because 'Well Wisher' and 'Constant Reader' and 'Dane Grouch' never give any address."

Mr. Hull smiled that slow, insouciant smile which confirms your suspicion



Violet Ewart, Australian Pianist

that you don't know very much and that what you do know is wrong, and then he spoke: "I have a plan which I should like to put into execution. I suppose it would not be feasible, but then" (musingly) "why not? It might be done. Some one should preserve all of the reviews of different critics and save them until the end of the season. Then he should chalk them up and see how often success followed their predictions and how often they were able to label a flivver at first sight. I guess we should find that what a critic had said in his first-night delirium didn't amount to very much."

What Mr. Hull was saying sounded like heresy to us. The critics whom we patronize are infallible, and while they seldom agree with us, we only reverence their opinion the more.

But we could not impart any of our humility to Mr. Hull. Of course, we are not naturally humble by sex, and then, hasn't Mr. Hull got eyelashes nearly an inch long? He has indeed. So we said meekly, "Oh, Mr. Hull, how you talk! Don't you think that George Blank and Louis Dash and John Doe know what they are talking about? Our words carried no conviction. Mr. Hull is a masterful man and we only felt like the home-brewed ingenue who rolls up her eyes at us and says, 'Don't you adore William Hart?'"

"You are a critic?" but this time with the rising inflection which made us stammer and say, "Well, yes, some-

times, when everybody else is busy reading copy or doing police news."

"Well, you do not think that you know more about acting than a man who has studied it for fifteen years, do you?"

"Merely, no! We don't think we know more about anything than anybody. We never say whether any one is a good actor or a bad actor, only whether we like the show and why or why not."

"Quite right," said Mr. Hull, approvingly. "And isn't it wonderful to be approved by Mr. Hull?"

"If all critics would stick to that it would be fair enough. But they won't. They think they know more about acting than the man whose life work it is." There is where Mr. Hull is wrong. Our favorite critic once said, "No one knows anything about acting, and those who do are wrong."

"It looked as though I never was going to be anything but a loser. Just because I was a successful lover fifteen years ago I have been making love ever since. I've made love in a uniform, in evening clothes, in doublet and hose, in a bathing suit, in a running costume, in a bathrobe, in."

But here we stopped him. "Please," we said, "desist."

"So, you see, my present play, 'Under Orders,' is something quite different. You have seen it?"

"Yes."

"And what did you think of it?"

"Well, we thought it was wonderful! How do you make yourself two inches taller in the third act?"

Of course, having only two people to play four parts is new, or almost new, but we must admit to a sensation of distinct disappointment when we learned that Mr. Hull was not going to make love to any one. The programme said Arthur Ford, Mrs. Ford, Captain Hartmann, Frau Hartmann, and there wasn't any one there for him to make love to, unless it was Frau Hartmann, and that didn't sound reasonable.

It gives Mr. Hull and Miss Shannon a chance to do some remarkable characterizations, but it seems a shame to waste a man as handsome as Shelley Hull on a play that is merely military. Probably Mr. Hull thinks so, too, but that was one thing he did not tell us.

Something About Bainsfather
Author of "The Better 'Ole"

Bruce Bainsfather, co-author of "The Better 'Ole" the farce comedy of the war, with music, that Mr. and Mrs. Coburn will produce at the Greenwich Village Theatre on the evening of October 19, is an Englishman, and, like Kipling, he was born in India, the son of a soldier and one of a family of soldiers. Bainsfather himself is a captain in the British army and is in active service at the front.

Possessing a happy knack of sketching, he has kept notebooks since he has been in service, and these have been published in "Fragments From France" and "Bullets and Ribbons," and now appear in a volume called "Bainsfather: A Few Fragments From His Life." The editor of "The London Express" writes something about this clever young soldier-artist-playwright, who has been able to see the funnier aspects of the war and has put his impressions into pictures and comments that have helped lift the burden of gloom from the hearts of Britons everywhere.

Whenever the Bainsfather cartoons have been published in American periodicals they have been received with appreciative laughter, largely due to their humanity. In fact, Bainsfather's interpretation of the war in his smaller episodes is as effective as Remarque's, and his pictures have brought comfort to those who have had difficulty in realizing that there is a funny side to war.

The title of the play, "The Better 'Ole," is taken from one of the lines in the comedy, when a soldier squatting in a shell hole remarks to a comrade during a fierce German bombardment: "If you know where there's a better 'ole, go to it!"

Neither preaching nor propaganda poison "The Better 'Ole." It aims at nothing but entertainment, and will be liked by veterans coming back from the trenches, as well as by the sturdy lads in khaki who are impatiently waiting to go into them. Songs are interpolated during the action of the play, and a large chorus of pretty girls has been engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Coburn. So there will be fun as well as thrills.

There are three modern musketeers in the play: Old Bill, Bert and Alf. Mr. Coburn will appear as Old Bill, Charles McNaughton as Bert, and Colin Campbell will be Alf. Mrs. Coburn appears as Victoire, a pretty French girl, to whom Bert pays ardent court. The play will be staged by Percival Knight, Elliott Schenck is the director of music, and the stage set designs have been designed by Ernest Albert.

U. S. Government
Largest Exhibitor

The United States government will be the largest exhibitor at the National Motion Picture exposition, to be held in Madison Square Garden October 5 to 13 inclusive.

Over one-third of the available floor space of the Garden has been turned over to various administrative departments of the government for the purpose of permitting them to bring to the attention of the public of New York City the magnitude and seriousness of the war work in which the government is engaged.

Owing to the close cooperation existing between the motion picture industry and all branches of the government it was decided to make this a war service exposition on the part of the motion picture industry. To carry out this idea every administrative department of the government was invited to exhibit, the space and all of the booth equipment being furnished free of charge.

Buy
Liberty
Bonds
And Put Your
Heart In It

ABRAHAM AND STRAUS
BROOKLYN

Very Important October Sale

Splendid Values—Coats
for Women at \$39.95

We are showing exceptionally good looking new Winter Coats made of excellent silvertone. Some of the models are full lined, others are lined only to the waist. One style (illustrated) has a large collar of skunk opossum. In one or more of the various styles, Coats at this price are shown in Reindeer, Plum, Brown, Hague, Burgundy, Taupe, Pekin and Holland Blue, Green and Oxford.

At \$29.95—Coats of Barella or Cheviot. At \$32.50—Semi-fitted coat of wool velour with belt across front.



\$29.95 \$295.00 \$39.95

Women's Stunning New Dresses
of Velveteen, \$16.98

It seems almost unbelievable that such effective Dresses can be offered at this price, but we have secured three new and distinctive models for Monday's selling, all three made of very good velveteen, the fabric so much in favor this season.

The style illustrated is made with a round neck and graceful tunic, short broad trimment. The main snail, finished with fringe, is shown, brown and black.

Other Charming Dresses for Various Occasions, \$29.75

Many of the dresses in this group have been copied from decidedly higher priced models and are wonderfully effective.

Afternoon Frocks of georgette crepe, crepe de chine, crepe meteor, satin and velveteen.

Street Frocks of serge, Poirer twill and jersey, made in tailored models.

At \$14.95—Black and navy blue serge. At \$19.75—Serges, velveteens and soft dresses.

Luxurious Coats of Hudson
Seal, \$295.00

Carefully selected muskrat pelts, dyed, form these handsome Coats, which measure 45 inches in length and are cut with a full sweep, though the lines are straight in effect.

The large collar and deep cuffs are of skunk, the lining of wonderfully lovely soft silk, in broadened effect.

Hudson Seal Muffs, \$14.75
Large size muffs in round models

Skunk Muffs, \$29.75
Made in large, round shapes

Second Floor, Central Building

165 Women's Specially
Purchased Suits, \$37.50

The maker of these desirable Suits obtained comparatively small amounts of various exceptionally good fabrics. There was not enough of any one kind to make a "complete line" of Suits, so he made up the materials into three or four suits of a kind. Materials are Broadcloth, Gabardine, cut Velour, Wide Wale chevion, Birdseye Cloth, Worsted, Velour, Poplin, Whipcords. One style is illustrated.

We bought these Suits and offer them at a price far below what models of equally fine fabrics would ordinarily cost.

Black, green, plum, navy Burgundy, Henna and beaver are shown. The sizes range from 32 to 44 bust measure.

Second Floor, Central Building

3,500 Yards of Rich Dress Satin
\$2.98 Grade; Black and Colors \$2.25 Yd.

We say "\$2.98 grade," because that is what this superb Satin—the most fashionable fabric of the season—regularly sells for in our stock. We secured an extra large quantity from the maker; and shall sell it on Monday, as an extraordinary offering, at this very much lower price.

Besides the very desirable black, there are twenty-five leading street and afternoon shades in the assortment.

The Satin is all silk, with a lustrous finish, and 35 inches wide.

Other Favorite Silks in Our Great Stock

BLACK COSTUME SATIN, \$4.98 and \$5.98 yard; 54 inches wide; a heavy quality for suits and evening wear.

BLACK AND COLORED VELVETEEN, \$2.98 yard; 28 inches wide; excellent color-range; one of the finest American qualities.

ALL-SILK GEORGETTE CREPE, \$2.50 yard. A splendidly soft, pliable quality, in black, white and a full range of colorings.

Second Floor, West Building

Third Floor, Central Building

Fourth Floor, Central Building

Fifth Floor, Central Building

Sixth Floor, Central Building

Seventh Floor, Central Building

Eighth Floor, Central Building

Ninth Floor, Central Building

Tenth Floor, Central Building

Eleventh Floor, Central Building

Twelfth Floor, Central Building

Thirteenth Floor, Central Building

Fourteenth Floor, Central Building

Fifteenth Floor, Central Building

Sixteenth Floor, Central Building

Seventeenth Floor, Central Building

Eighteenth Floor, Central Building

Nineteenth Floor, Central Building

Twentieth Floor, Central Building

Twenty-first Floor, Central Building

Twenty-second Floor, Central Building

Twenty-third Floor, Central Building

Twenty-fourth Floor, Central Building

Twenty-fifth Floor, Central Building

Twenty-sixth Floor, Central Building

Twenty-seventh Floor, Central Building

Twenty-eighth Floor, Central Building

Twenty-ninth Floor, Central Building

Thirtieth Floor, Central Building

Thirty-first Floor, Central Building

Thirty-second Floor, Central Building

Thirty-third Floor, Central Building

Thirty-fourth Floor, Central Building

Thirty-fifth Floor, Central Building

Thirty-sixth Floor, Central Building

Thirty-seventh Floor, Central Building

Thirty-eighth Floor, Central Building

Thirty-ninth Floor, Central Building

Fortieth Floor, Central Building

Forty-first Floor, Central Building

Forty-second Floor, Central Building

Forty-third Floor, Central Building

Forty-fourth Floor, Central Building

Forty-fifth Floor, Central Building

Forty-sixth Floor, Central Building

Forty-seventh Floor, Central Building

Forty-eighth Floor, Central Building

Forty-ninth Floor, Central Building

Fiftieth Floor, Central Building

Fifty-first Floor, Central Building

Fifty-second Floor, Central Building

Fifty-third Floor, Central Building

Fifty-fourth Floor, Central Building

Fifty-fifth Floor, Central Building

Fifty-sixth Floor, Central Building

Fifty-seventh Floor, Central Building

Fifty-eighth Floor, Central Building

Fifty-ninth Floor, Central Building

Sixtieth Floor, Central Building

Sixty-first Floor, Central Building

Sixty-second Floor, Central Building

Sixty-third Floor, Central Building

Sixty-fourth Floor, Central Building

Sixty-fifth Floor, Central Building

Sixty-sixth Floor, Central Building

Sixty-seventh Floor, Central Building

Sixty-eighth Floor, Central Building

Sixty-ninth Floor, Central Building

Seventieth Floor, Central Building

Seventy-first Floor, Central Building

Seventy-second Floor, Central Building

Seventy-third Floor, Central Building

Seventy-fourth Floor, Central Building

Seventy-fifth Floor, Central Building

Seventy-sixth Floor, Central Building

Seventy-seventh Floor, Central Building

Seventy-eighth Floor, Central Building

Seventy-ninth Floor, Central Building

Eightieth Floor, Central Building

Eighty-first Floor, Central Building

Eighty-second Floor, Central Building

Eighty-third Floor, Central Building

Eighty-fourth Floor, Central Building

Eighty-fifth Floor, Central Building

Eighty-sixth Floor, Central Building

Eighty-seventh Floor, Central Building

Eighty-eighth Floor, Central Building

Eighty-ninth Floor, Central Building

Ninetieth Floor, Central Building

Ninety-first Floor, Central Building

Ninety-second Floor, Central Building

Ninety-third Floor, Central Building

Ninety-fourth Floor, Central Building

Ninety-fifth Floor, Central Building

Ninety-sixth Floor, Central Building

Ninety-seventh Floor, Central Building

Ninety-eighth Floor, Central Building

Ninety-ninth Floor, Central Building

Hundredth Floor, Central Building

Hundred-first Floor, Central Building

Hundred-second Floor, Central Building

Hundred-third Floor, Central Building

Hundred-fourth Floor, Central Building

Hundred-fifth Floor, Central Building

Hundred-sixth Floor, Central Building

Hundred-seventh Floor, Central Building

Hundred-eighth Floor, Central Building

Hundred-ninth Floor, Central Building

One hundredth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-first Floor, Central Building

One hundred-second Floor, Central Building

One hundred-third Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fourth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fifth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-sixth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-seventh Floor, Central Building

One hundred-eighth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-ninth Floor, Central Building

One hundredth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-first Floor, Central Building

One hundred-second Floor, Central Building

One hundred-third Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fourth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fifth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-sixth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-seventh Floor, Central Building

One hundred-eighth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-ninth Floor, Central Building

One hundredth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-first Floor, Central Building

One hundred-second Floor, Central Building

One hundred-third Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fourth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fifth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-sixth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-seventh Floor, Central Building

One hundred-eighth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-ninth Floor, Central Building

One hundredth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-first Floor, Central Building

One hundred-second Floor, Central Building

One hundred-third Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fourth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-fifth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-sixth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-seventh Floor, Central Building

One hundred-eighth Floor, Central Building

One hundred-ninth Floor, Central Building

One hundredth Floor, Central Building